

Message Text

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ACTION SCSE-00

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC, MX
SUBJ: PRISONER HUNGER STRIKE IN MEXICO CITY, SITREP 7

REF: MEXICO 15705 AND PREVIOUS

1. CONOFF VISITED NORTE PRISON IN MEXICO CITY DECEMBER 21 FOR REGULAR PRISON VISIT. NINE OF THE TEN AMERICAN PRISONERS APPEARED AND SAID THAT THEY WERE CONTINUING THEIR HUNGER STRIKE. NONE COMPLAINED OF ANY PHYSICAL AILMENTS APART FROM WEAKNESS.

2. CONOFF SPOKE WITH NEW DIRECTOR, LIC. SERGIO SANTIBANEZ, FORMER SUBDIRECTOR OF SANTA MARTA PRISON, AND SUBDIRECTOR JAVIER TRUJILLO. SANTIBANEZ HAD JUST FINISHED MEETING WITH A GROUP OF PRISONERS OF VARIOUS NATIONALITIES AND A GOM OFFICIAL IDENTIFIED ONLY AS A "LEGAL ADVISER." ACCORDING TO SANTIBANEZ, THE GOM OFFICIAL CALLED THE MEETING TO DISCUSS THE PAROLE LEGISLATION. HE ADDED THAT THE OFFICIAL WAS VERY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PASSAGE OF THE PAROLE LAW BUT HAD TOLD THE PRISONERS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO PRESSURE THE MEXICAN CONGRESS. WHEN CONOFF POINTED OUT THAT MEXICAN CONGRESS MUST REACH A DECISION BY DECEMBER 31, SANTIBANEZ INSISTED THAT THERE WAS A STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT THE PAROLE LEGISLATION WOULD

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BE PASSED DURING A SPECIAL SESSION AFTER THAT DATE.

3. CONOFF DID NOT NOTE ANY UNUSUAL ACTIVITY AT NORTE AND BELIEVES THAT THE PRISONERS' HUNGER STRIKE IS LIMITED TO DORM NO. 5 WHERE MANY AMERICANS AND FOREIGNERS ARE CONFINED. THE DIRECTOR NOTED THAT ONLY 122 OF

THE 600 PRISONERS AT NORTE ARE DRUG OFFENDERS WHO
WOULD THEREFORE STAND TO BENEFIT FROM THE PAROLE
LEGISLATION.

4. AN ADDITIONAL RUMOR CONCERNING PAROLE LEGISLATION
WAS PASSED TO CONOFF BY ONE OF THE PRISONERS. HE SAID
THAT THE UNIDENTIFIED GOM OFFICIAL WHO HAD VISITED
THE PRISON THIS MORNING TOLD HIM THAT MEXICAN MAFIOSOS
WERE PRESSURING CONGRESS TO PASS THE PAROLE LEGISLATION
AND HAD PAID 50,000 PESOS (APPROXIMATELY U.S. \$2500)
TO A LARGE NEWSPAPER FOR PLACEMENT OF BANNER HEADLINES
CONCERNING THE PRISONER STRIKE. NOTE: THIS APPARENTLY
REFERS TO BANNER HEADLINES OF SEVERAL MEXICO CITY
NEWSPAPERS ON DECEMBER 20, ANNOUNCING THE "BEGINNING"
OF THE PRISONERS' HUNGER STRIKE.
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